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in the future. Is there any advantage, economic or otherwise, in this particular system of joint labour? To share food from the same dish is certainly more economical than preparing separate portions. There is always enough, the Bemba women say, if you eat out of one basket.[1] This is ensured by the custom of grouping of men and of women and children at meals.

Again, it must be recognized that joint housekeeping makes for greater security in a society with no system of exchange or purchase of food. To be attached to a 'big house' is to share its fortunes—to have the chance of delicacies like beer and meat as often as possible, and to be certain of support in case of a shortage. A comparison between conditions in a modern village where the kinship groups are smaller (p. 153) makes this clear. Where the unit of consumption is only one or two households the people may be better off at good seasons of the year but practically destitute in a bad one.

Joint cooking also eases the housewife's labour very largely. The younger women, in particular, like grinding and pounding together, and seem to work with greater enthusiasm in this way. The difficulties of combining lengthy cooking processes with gardening have already been described (Chap. VI and VIII). The woman with several young girls to help her may be able to work in her husband's fields and yet be able to provide relish for the evening meal. The isolated housewife may not, and the notes given on typical families (Chap. X) show this fact concretely.

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Lastly, we saw that the Bemba system of education provides for no direct instruction in housecraft or a knowledge of the lore of the bush, but this information is acquired by a process of imitation through membership of a large group. Matrilocal marriage means that the girl is under the orders of her mother both before and after marriage for many years and thus learns the arts of organization, leadership, and the management of supplies by slow degrees. This seemed to me not the least important function of the matrilocal cooking team.

Domestic Economics in Modern Marriages.

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The partial break-down of the matrilocal family system has had pronounced effects on the whole domestic economy of the Bemba.

[1] It will be seen (pp. 139, 41, 70) how housewives give their kinswomen grain to grind when food is plentiful, a small portion of flour when it is less so, and an invitation to share their dish when it is really scarce.

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Nowadays the boy, on his betrothal, usually goes to work for Europeans, either in his own neighbourhood or on the copper belt. In the latter case he probably stays away a year or two and does not return to cut trees for his father-in-law. He sends back 10s. a year instead. Theoretically this money is intended to be used to pay a labourer to do the bridegroom's work, but this rarely happens. The father-in-law tends to spend this money immediately on some European object which he urgently needs and can get in no other way—a cloth, for instance, or a hoe. Thus a bridegroom may fulfil his contract most satisfactorily according to native standards, but yet the gardens he should have made may remain uncut.

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After his return the young man marries his bride and probably lives in the village for a year or two. He usually works for his father-in-law during this time, but under modern conditions the old men are powerless to exact their full due of service, and I saw a good many cases in which young husbands idled in their wives' villages for a whole season, on the plea they had come back home to 'rest' (cf. p. 172). In any case, though they consider themselves entirely responsible for clothing their wives and children, they do not feel bound to feed them until later in life. The economic team of the father-in-law and his sons-in-law cannot exist under these conditions, with resultant effects not only on the food-supply of the family but on the agricultural education of the young men.

In other cases the young man gets permission to take his bride straight away with him to the mines after a few months of married life, or on his second visit there, which is the more common procedure. In this case it is the woman who forgoes the education in housecraft and manners she should have received in her mother's group. Girls of 16 or 17 transplanted from their villages in this way seem in a particularly defenceless position when living near their husbands' place of work, and it is probable that the matrilocal system, while it makes for an easier adjustment for the women left behind in a 'manless country-side' under modern conditions, puts young wives at a particular disadvantage when they are taken from their homes and the support to which they have been accustomed. Whether it is housecraft, midwifery, or the weaning of children, they are divorced from the ordinary agencies of tribal education and that female solidarity to which they are used.

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These are, as yet, isolated instances. As a whole, it can be said that the Bemba system of joint cookery and domestic co-operation continues to work in the old fashion, except in the few suburban villages in which the groups of households so united are much smaller, limited usually to two or three huts, and therefore the advantages of pooled resources are reduced. But the economic dependence of a young couple on the wife's parents which formerly acted as a test of the husband's suitability, a sanction for his good behaviour, and a means of education in technical activities, no longer functions in the same way. Where the husband is intermittently away at the mines, the father-in-law assumes a more complete responsibility for his married daughter and her children and for a longer period than before, but has to do without the advantage of his son-in-law's agricultural help, so that his obligations are often heavier than he can properly carry out.

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and light new fire in his hut before going out to fire his garden, an act for which the other villagers wait, but do not participate in. At the capital the headman of the village (*umwine mushi*), an official with entirely ritual functions and placed in charge of one of the chief's sacred fires, must extinguish his own fire overnight, borrow new fire from a second sacred hearth in the morning, purify himself with the aid of his wife, and go out with a glowing cinder of the royal fire to light the gardens. I never saw this rite carried out at the capital, and its privacy, as in the case of all ceremonial appertaining to the chief's fire, was stressed. The ritualizing of this particular economic process seemed to me to depend on the beliefs in the nature of fire and its sacred properties rather than on anything connected with the agricultural activity itself.

(*c*) *Sowing ceremonies.* Among the Bemba sowing ceremonies are insignificant compared to the tree-cutting rites. The staple millet seeds are not blessed at all, although they are doctored usually with the *icibyalilo* magic. Prayers are only offered to the *imipashi* in the case of subsidiary crops, and not by any means for all of these. Pumpkins, cow-peas, Livingstone potatoes, Kaffir corn, maize, and the *amankolobwe* are those usually given as the list.[1] Of course, the ritual may have been fuller in the old days. The Bisa and the Ushi describe a ceremony similar to those of a number of the Southern Bantu, in which the headman or the chief blesses or doctors handfuls of seeds given him by each of the women of the community, and these specially treated seeds are mixed with the rest to be sown. But among the Bemba I only collected one account of a rite of this sort. The *bakabilo* tell of a sowing ceremony at the Paramount's court following the special tree-cutting rite performed by Mulewa Cimfwembe in the old days (cf. p. 371). They say that after the latter had 'watched the trees of the land', and fire had been set to the royal garden, another hereditary official, the Kamenge, took his place to watch the freshly sown seeds until the ripening of the crop. He also kept sex taboos and lived apart in a grass shelter during this time. This act was known as 'watching the seeds of the chief'. It has evidently not been performed for two reigns at least. Another lost sowing

[1] Compare the list of crops for which the first-fruit rites are performed. It will be seen that Junod's suggestion that such rites remain associated with the older African crops is largely borne out (cf. p. 20), but maize is, of course, a more recent introduction, possibly included as it is sown and also ripens at the same time as most of the others listed above.

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769 rite was connected with one of the most sacred of the Paramount's
796 *babenye*, a girdle made of the skin cut from the abdomen of a legen-
dary figure, Mwase, said to have been killed for committing adul-
178 tery with the Citimukulu's wife. It has now long since rotted
away, but living men tell of occasions when the relic was taken from the *benye* house, bound round the waist of a young virgin, the maternal niece of Munuca, the greatest *mukabilo*. The girl then danced across the garden of the chief, scattering blessed sorghum seeds broadcast, while the Citimukulu and his *bakabilo* followed behind. This story, always told with great delight, seemed to me a sign that the sowing rites must have had greater importance formerly than at the present day.

769 Nowadays, the blessing of the seeds at a commoner's village is
796 done in typical fashion by standing them in a calabash at the end of the headman's bed. In the morning, after the usual purification
241 ceremony, they are sown in the headman's garden, all the villagers coming to help.[1] But I never saw such a rite performed myself, and I noticed that some natives were doubtful as to which seeds actually had to be blessed. For instance, of 10 informants, all gave pumpkins in their list, 8 Livingstone potatoes, 7 Kaffir corn, 6 maize, 5 *amankolobwe*. At the capitals, however, the sowing rites still persist. At Nkula's village in 1930 Kaffir-corn seeds in a huge gourd were stood overnight in the *benye* house and were sown next day on the chief's *mputa* by all the women of the village. The sowing ceremonies evidently used to give the people a sign when to start planting their crops, a matter on which skilled guidance is often needed, but it is doubtful whether they were ever occasions of big tribal gatherings of rejoicing as in the case of tree-cutting or harvest rites.

769 (*d*) *First-fruit ceremonies.* Some form of first-fruits ceremony
796 seems to be performed in all typical Bantu societies, and in these there are certain common elements recognizable. But the sym-
171 bolism of these rites is often exceedingly complex, and varies
182 widely from area to area. The ceremonies also tend to become the occasion of big tribal gatherings such as the army rites of the Zulu since they inevitably occur at the plentiful season of the

[1] One informant told me his father, a headman, always blessed the seeds of all the villagers and gave them each a handful to mix with their crops, but in most instances now it seems that the headman merely blesses and sows his own seeds. In Bisa districts, such as that near Shiwa Dandu, the original form of the rite seems to be more often adhered to.

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coming of the white man, the warrior type was more highly valued than the good gardener in youth, and modern migratory labour has wiped out the stage in which the one would normally have passed into the other. In the absence of stock or other material possessions, the idea of accumulation never existed, nor the habit of organized trade, and with the present shortage of money-making possibilities in this area and the lack of a cash crop, the introduction of European currency did not act as a new incentive to agricultural work, rather the reverse.

Another difficulty inherent in the Bemba system of gardening is the absence of any definite units by which success can be measured or effort reckoned—a fact I have already stressed in descriptions of their methods of calculating quantities or assessing needs. The size of a Bemba garden is not fixed. The labour force of a family varies from month to month. The people are not in the habit of calculating the size of their field or its yield, the time it would take to clear the trees on it, or the amount of grain annually produced. Nor does the particular staple crop used lend itself to accurate measurement of this kind. I found that, if I asked Bemba how much ground they intended to clear, old men had some conception of their future needs, but young men more often replied: 'How much shall we cut? Oh, we shall cut until our arms ache. . . . Till our strength is exhausted. . . . Until we want to go and work for the Europeans. . . . Or until laziness seizes hold of us. Will the garden give enough to feed us? We do not know. Perhaps it will.' These statements are perhaps more casual than would have been heard in the old days—that is impossible to tell—but, in any case, it is clear that with such a system of reckoning, success in food production depends very largely on leadership and a definite compulsion to work.

It is just this leadership which, as we saw, is no longer effective. The matrilocal kinship organization with the economic group which is based on it, is one that is breaking down rapidly in contact with European conditions. The drive behind agricultural production is largely associated with beliefs in the authority of the Bemba chief, sentiments that have been inevitably weakened by contact with Europeanism. The Bemba are still willing to garden if told to, as the experience of the Government during the recent locust raids has shown. When ordered to dig four hundred mounds of cassava, most natives complied, and when the order was

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461 rescinded they gave up the extra effort. At present, however, the chiefs have little incentive to give such orders, and shortage of 178 agricultural staff makes it impossible for Europeans to exert the same leadership. Whether or not it will be possible for Europeans to take the initiative in stimulating increased agricultural production it is impossible to say, but I have sometimes been impressed by the surprise of natives that any white person should be interested in their cultivation and by the question of an intelligent chief, 'Why do the Government officers ask me about the history of the Bemba and their magic, and never about our gardens and the growing of food?'

461 The effects of absentee labour on food production have been constantly referred to in this book. Its results on gardening enthusiasm are not easy to summarize. It is, however, a fact that men who go back to their villages from the mines do so to 'rest', after what is for them unusual strain, and not to work, and the common assumption of the European that every month spent at home can and should be given to making new gardens is really unwarranted. It is difficult also for a native to maintain his interest in agriculture after staying at the mines for as long a period as two or three years. When working at Luanshya Mine myself, I noticed that young men on their first visit were definitely homesick, and that old men spoke gladly of the possibility of settling down; but it was obvious that a man who had already made two or three visits of a few years each had no longer the same interest in talking of village life.

The agricultural enthusiasm of natives who stay behind in their village is an equally important factor. The native habit of working in twos or threes with relatives or age-mates is important from this point of view. It means that the youths of a village tend to go together to the mines in groups of five or six for a year or two, thus leaving their home community with only three or four old men in charge. Thus, to say that 40 or 50 per cent. of the total male Bemba are away annually from the Territory gives a misleading impression. It seems to imply that each village has half of its men present, whereas in fact some communities have plenty of male labour for a year or two while the others are so denuded of men that the remaining inhabitants tend to sink into apathy or leave the village to join a more flourishing community. Two or three energetic or enterprising natives seem to raise the whole tone of

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Preface

I watched the ceremony described in this book in 1931 while I was doing a year's anthropological research among the Bemba, the dominant tribe in North-eastern Rhodesia. In 1933 I returned to the same area and continued my work until 1934; but though I collected a number of additional comments on the rites known in that country as chisungu (*cisungu*), I never had the good fortune to attend another ceremony of the same kind.

Nevertheless, I thought it important to publish an account of the single chisungu I was able to see because such ceremonies are rapidly dying out in Central Africa. I think it certain that the chisungu is performed much less frequently now than during my two visits; it may even be quite extinct. I have written in the present tense in this book because I have not been able to revisit Lubemba to see what changes have taken place there. When I use such phrases as 'in the old days' or 'formerly' I refer to customs which were no longer evident at the time of my visit. When I use the present tense I refer to practices current between the years 1930 and 1934 when I was still living in the country.

Heavy teaching duties and a world war have prevented me from publishing this material for over twenty years. The delay has been unfortunate except from one point of view: the book now appears shortly after one entitled *African Figurines* written by my friend Hans Cory, and published by the same firm. Mr. Cory's book describes the pottery figurines used in initiation ceremonies which resemble the chisungu in many parts of East, Central and South Africa. In Tanganyika, where he has worked for many years, these rites are disappearing as rapidly as they are in Northern Rhodesia. Mr. Cory has made great efforts to collect as many of the figurines as possible while they could still be acquired. His book indicates the wide distribution of these pottery symbols in Tanganyika and their use as one of the teaching methods of the initiation cere-

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X 881 554 admiration of visitors. (See page 88.) Just as the Bemba headman tries to attract people to come and live in his village and anxiously watches to see whether he is successful in building up a community, so the *nacimbusa* estimates her power by the number of women of eminence who attended throughout or who appeared on visits from time to time.

X 881 556 Present-day differences of income have added to the prestige aspect of the ceremony. A man of substance wants his daughter's chisungu to be talked about. Like an English father who defends the cost of a 'white wedding' by saying 'I wanted to do my best for the girl', a Bemba father will say 'Well, I don't want people to say "That is not a man of wealth! There was little beer to dance the girl in his village." ' There seems even to have been some competition for the privilege of 'owning the chisungu'—between a father and a mother's brother, for instance. It will be remembered that besides the provision of food and beer, respect can also be expressed in Bemba society by songs and feasts.[1]

X 881 ● 178 A really successful chisungu is difficult to carry out under modern conditions since the absence of men and the smaller household groups result in smaller accumulations of food. No large sums of money are exchanged at the chisungu ceremony, so that chiefs and men in authority stand to gain little by a performance. I think these are the reasons why the chisungu has disappeared rather quickly. It is, moreover, organized entirely by women, and male dominance is emphasized in a modern wage-earning society.

X 881 171 The survival of ceremonial is apt to depend on secondary motives of this sort in some parts of Africa, such as Sierra Leone and South Africa. In both contact with missionaries has taken place over a longer period, and the people are much more sophisticated. But, in the case of the Mende, for instance, the chiefs gain a large income from the holding of the *bundu* rite for girls; this is acknowledged to be one of the reasons why it has not only not died out, but it has even increased in influence.[2] The Kriges also point out that some initiation schools in the Northern Transvaal have

[1] A man might give his wife a second marriage ceremony in her old age (the *bwinga* marriage) for respect.

[2] Kenneth Little, 'The role of the secret society in cultural specialization', *American Anthropologist*, April 1949. The privilege of holding Yao initiation ceremonies is greatly valued. (See Appendix A.)

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joking and talking and although there were admonitions by the *nacimbusa* to work harder, to be more serious, and to dance more strenuously (see p. 73), it was plain that these were not spontaneous emotions.

The teasing of the girls was apparently considered to be a duty rather than a pleasurable excitement.

There remains the question of the significance of the ceremony to Bemba in terms of its survival in times of change. The chisungu was forbidden by missionaries some thirty to fifty years before I saw a performance in 1931. It is a conspicuous affair since it consists so largely of drumming and dancing and it is not a rite which can be performed in secret within a hut. It is run by women alone and does not have the backing of the chiefs who have supported initiation ceremonies quite tenaciously in some parts of Africa. Present-day economic factors such as shortage of food and the absence of men at the mines, also militate against the persistence of such a rite. In these conditions it is worth asking which part of the chisungu has actually survived.

The rites were everywhere shortened in 1931 and 1933 when I was in the country. In many places they were not performed at all. In these cases the puberty ritual proper, that is to say the bringing of the girl to the fire after her first period, was retained alone. Although the chisungu itself was not organized, yet there was a combination of the first *ukusolwela*, rite (see p. 54) and the seclusion of the girl in a special hut for some days in villages near the motor road leading from Broken Hill to Kasama and also in the mine compounds at Luanshya and Ndola, all of them areas of maximum contact. This would seem to bear out the conclusions to which the analysis of Bemba comments lead, namely that it is the magic rites of protection that the people consider the most essential part of the chisungu. It also supports Schapera's hypothesis that magic rites tend to survive in contact with Europeanism, while religious ceremonies associated with moral values or prayers to ancestral spirits tend to be abandoned.

The following table gives some attempt at a numerical analysis of the morals taught by means of the chisungu songs and *mbusa*. It will be referred to again.

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Songs Sung During the Ceremony

881 X
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175 ●

[532]

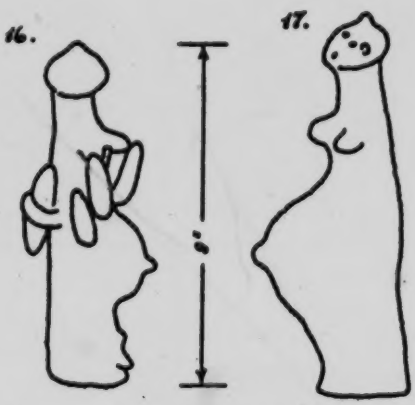
Fig. 15. *The mortar.*

Interpretation. The woman is to pound grain quickly for her husband and not slowly as she did when she was a girl.

No. 53. *The nursing mother* (*Coshi wa yoma*) (Fig. 16). The mother is pregnant and is shown carrying four babies at the same time, one at her breast and three at her back. This model was thought exceedingly funny by the Cisonde women. They sang:

Mayo alembepa!	My mother deceived me!
Coshi wa yoma!	Coshi ua yoma!
Kanshi uambepafye;	So you just deceived me;
Naimita umusuku.	I have become pregnant again.

[539]



[532]

Fig. 16. *The nursing mother* (*Coshi wa yoma*).
Fig. 17. *The pregnant woman.*

Interpretation. Coshi wa yoma was a midwife of legendary fame and is merely addressed in this song. The girl complains because her mother told her to wean her first child too soon so that it died;

grown extensively in the past and some Kazembes(1) were acknowledged hashish-addicts. 276

TRADE

Slaves and ivory (exchanged for cloth and merchandise) were for a long period the main trading assets of the country.(2) Salt, otter-skins and beeswax(3) were other traded commodities. The valley fish used to be exchanged for the mushrooms, honey and wild fruits of the plateau. It is still bartered with the Lungu *citemene* cultivators for millet, from which hot beer (*katubi*) is brewed. Trade with the Swahili, Arab and European merchants was the Kazembe's monopoly.(4) Ivory came mostly from the Congo side of the Luapula being brought as tribute.(5) Fish, the chief export article at the present time, is marketed in the mining areas of the Belgian Congo, only a small proportion going to the Rhodesian Copperbelt.(6) Kasenga, with its ice factory and road connection with Elisabethville, is the local distribution centre. Small quantities of cassava and bananas are also offered for sale there. 439

ECONOMIC CHANGE

Labour migration to the mines and sales of fish are the most noticeable signs of economic change. Subsistence agriculture prevails although, with the establishment of co-operative farms, the growing of cash crops may develop. 178 ●

CRAFTS

Iron-ore, abundant in the hillside country to the east, was smelted and iron was worked(7) until the advent of the British South Africa Company. Imported trade goods have since displaced native-made hoes, axe-heads, knives and spears. 325

Cotton spinning and weaving are other crafts which have fallen into decay.(8) The rough cotton cloth mentioned by Livingstone(9) is no longer made. Mats woven from reeds, papyrus and the leaf of the *mukalala* palm and split bamboo baskets are still made by men after the rains when the fishing season is over.(10) Pottery-making was confined to women. The men worked wood and leather, dressed skins and prepared barkcloth. They hollowed dug-outs, carved wooden plates and crudely finished figures of ritual significance.(11) Dyes were procured from plants and trees and a tree-bark infusion was used in treating wounds.(12) Potash salt was extracted from plant ashes.(13) The method widely used among the Tabwa and Bena Kabwili on the north-eastern fringe of Lake Mweru,(14) where a brownish salt is obtained by filtering water through salpetrous earth and evaporating the brine,(15) may Also have been employed. 28 32 [386] [317]

(1) Crawford, op.cit., pp.99, 100.
(2) Burton, p.130; Gamitto, I, p.398.
(3) Valdez, II, p.187.
(4) Burton, p.109.
(5) ibid., p.188.
(6) Brelsford, 2, 1947, p.70.
(7) Livingstone, I, p.307.
(8) Crawford, 2, opp.194.
(9) op.cit., p.267.
(10) Moore, 1937.
(11) Valdez, II, p.218.
(12) Gamitto, I, p.386.
(13) Valdez, op.cit., p.246.
(14) Livingstone, op.cit., p.223.
(15) Described in some detail by Moore.